

WHEN CAN WE FIND COMFORTERS?

NO. 2322

A SERMON

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“Whence shall I seek comforters for thee?”

Nahum 3:7

IT is the business of the prophet of God and of the minister of Christ to seek comfort for those who are in distress. “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.” It is a part of our calling to seek, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to bring words of consolation to those who are heavy in heart. We have other work to do, but still this is a part of our commission. God would not have His people’s heads hang down, He would have their hearts full of joy and peace in believing, so He sends us, with tender, sympathetic words, to strive to comfort all that mourn.

I can truly say that while this is our duty, when we succeed in it, it is also our delight. To take the burden from the heavy heart is a great joy. Whenever I have comforted any mourners, I think that I have had even more comfort than the comforted ones. You cannot impart consolation to others without, at the same time, enjoying it yourself, in some measure at any rate.

You put out your hands to open the door into the King’s banqueting house for another and lo, your own fingers drip with sweet-smelling myrrh, from the handle of the door! Try to cheer another heart and you will go the nearest way to cheer your own. So then, I am glad that I have a text like this—only the gladness is sobered and saddened by the connection in which it stands and by the almost hopeless character of the question, “Whence shall I seek comforters for thee?”

I shall have only two divisions, tonight. First, *sometimes our work is very easy*. Secondly, *at other times, it becomes so hard as even to be impossible*.

I. First, SOMETIMES OUR WORK IS VERY EASY, especially to those long practiced in it. To a young surgeon, a case of a broken bone may be a difficulty, but to one who has long been in his profession, it is a simple matter and he soon sets the bone.

Now, first, it is a comparatively easy thing to find comforts for *true children of God in the day of their adversity*. Dark days come to the brightest saints. A Christian may, perhaps, enjoy worldly prosperity for a long time and then the tide may turn, and the man may find all that he had melt away before his eyes. Nothing that he does may succeed. He may be brought very low, even to poverty. In such a case as that, it is not hard to comfort the child of God, for the Lord helps him to say, “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

My brother, your riches consist not in gold and silver—you have in heaven a more enduring portion and if God, by impoverishing you of these grosser things, enriches you with more refined treasures, you will be a gainer—your loss will turn to your eternal profit. Wherefore, we comfort you readily enough with words like these.

The same is true with *God’s people in bereavement*. We come to them and tell them that it is the Lord who has done it, and ask, “Shall he not do what seemeth him good?” In many cases we are able to tell them that they have not lost their relative or friend. Their beloved ones have only crossed the river a little before them and they will soon pass over the same stream, and be forever joined where they shall part no more.

Though it is some beloved child, or other dear relative, or even the partner of one's bosom, or a much-beloved friend, yet to find consolation for mourners of that kind is not the hardest work that the pastor has to do. Refrain your eyes from weeping, especially keep back your heart from tears. They shall come again from the land of their captivity. They die but to live forever and you shall meet them before long.

And dear friends, it is not so very difficult to find comfort for *children of God who are under the trial of persecution*. There are still many of God's people who endure the trial of cruel mockings and something worse than that. Some of you have to suffer in many ways for Christ's sake. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Let not this trouble you—Christ has provided abundant consolation for all who suffer with Him, for they shall reign with Him forever and ever. They shall be—

*"Brightest of the saints in light,
'Midst the bright ones doubly bright."*

They shall receive larger palms and brighter crowns than others who have suffered less for His dear name's sake. We do not say about these dear Christians, "Whence shall I seek comforters for thee?" for we know where to point them to most effectual consolation.

Sometimes, we have to deal with *fainting Christians*, yet when we meet with them we do not find their case one of superlative difficulty. Every now and then, I suppose, almost all of us get into a condition in which our joy and comfort have to be looked for, but can scarcely be found. Partly through ill-health, partly from the strain of high excitement, which is followed by a reaction, we get to be like Elias, when he said, "Now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers."

There are times when the pulse scarcely beats and the blood begins to cool and the heart is faint. Beloved, whenever we meet with you in that condition, we tell you that we have been in that state, ourselves. Nay, we remind you that our Lord Himself was in an agony and was greatly depressed in spirit. We have to assure you that the condition of your frames and feelings does not affect your safety in Christ. We have to remind you that, though you are changed, God is not changed.

The promise, the old covenant, stands just as fast when you are down in distress as when you are on the high places of exultation. You are saved by faith, not by feeling—and when feeling ebbs out to the very last degree, still hold on to Jesus—sink or swim, still trust in Him. When you see no trace of His actual presence with you, rely upon Him all the same and be of good cheer. This is not hard to say—and when the Spirit of God is with us, we find no lack of consolation for fainting saints.

Nor do we find ourselves much embarrassed by cases of *disappointed workers*. We hear them say, "Surely we have labored in vain and spent our strength for nothing. Who has believed our report? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" But we tell them of many of God's saints who labored long without seeing any immediate result and yet they were accepted of God. Jeremiah, the plaintive, weeping prophet, saw the people reject everything that he said, yet he was not rejected, but accepted of God. And amongst honorable men, there is none more excellent than the prophet Jeremy.

Beloved, you may be sent to warn a people who never will be saved and yet you will be blessed. When Isaiah saw the seraphim, and in answer to God's call, "Whom shall I send?" said, "Here am I; send me," you notice what his commission was. He was sent, not to bring the people to God, but to go and say to them, "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes." He obeyed his commission as it was given to him and his Lord rewarded him.

That may be your case. Besides, you are no judge of your own success. I think that it has been noticed by ministers, very often—so often as to be like a Baconian induction—that when we think that we preach worst, God usually blesses the people most, and that when we appear to have had the least power, God displays His ability more clearly than at other times. Wherefore, when you go home

weeping, while you have only sown in tears, you shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you. But you are no judge of what you do yourself, and you cannot tell what the results of your work may be. If you see them not, the angels may have seen them, and while you are weeping, they are rejoicing. At any rate, you are not responsible for the harvest—you are responsible for plowing and sowing. If you have done your work well, in the fear of God, what comes of it rests with God and not with you.

Sometimes, beloved friends, we have the task of comforting *dying believers*, and that is no very difficult thing. There is one whom I could mention to you who, not long ago, spent all that he had in taking a new business, which he needed for his growing family, and he hoped to prosper in it. He had scarcely been in the house many weeks before his daughter was brought home to him and when taken upstairs, she was found to be raving with madness. She was watched over carefully, but to the breaking of his heart, she had to be put away.

Not long after, another, dear to his heart, was suddenly taken away. By-and-by, he, himself, fell ill and at last, going to a physician, he was told that his case was a very serious one—he had better see a specialist. He saw the specialist, who told him that he had an internal cancer, that he might be operated upon, but that, in all probability, he would die under the operation, and he would advise him to live as long as he could.

That happened not long ago. If I were to introduce him to you, what kind of a man would you expect him to be, with his bereavements and with his prospect of soon dying probably a very painful death? You would suppose that he would look very dull, haggard, and so forth. There is not a more cheerful person beneath the cover of heaven. And when he crawled up to London, the other day, to do some business, and some persons wondered that he did it, he said, “While I can, I will do my best in the place where God has put me. When I can get out no more, I will sit still and praise God. And when the time comes, I will die with my face towards the New Jerusalem.”

That is how Christians live and that is how Christians die. We do not find, when we have to deal with a believer in Christ, that it is at all a difficult thing to cheer the heart either in the near or the distant prospect of death.

Nor, dear friends, do we find ourselves much troubled in seeking to comfort *repenting backsliders*. It is grievous that any should backslide. It is horrible that the church of God should have her name disgraced, that the Christ of God should have His religion bespattered by the iniquities of professing Christians. But when the Lord touches the wandering heart and it breaks under a sense of guilt—and the man turns back to his God, we find it easy to say, “The LORD delighteth in mercy. Return, ye backsliding children. God is willing to receive you, He is waiting to bless you.”

The Word of God is full of consolation to backsliders who are seeking His face. Guilty as you are, the Lord says, “Return unto me, for I am married unto you.” He might well divorce you, but the Lord, the God of Jacob, says that He hates putting away. He will not cast off the people of His choice. He is glad to receive them back after all their uncleanness and filthiness. Yes, there is much comfort for returning backsliders and if there are any such here tonight, I would put out my hand and say, “Come back, my brother—come and welcome to the Savior.”

And certainly there is no difficulty in trying to comfort *seeking sinners*. If any man is seeking the Savior, the Savior is seeking him.

*“Thy seeking His face
Is all of His grace.”*

He has begun with you, or else you would not have begun with Him, and now, if you will simply trust Him, only trust Him, you shall have immediate peace. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” That is a glorious passage. “He that believeth on him is not condemned,” is another blessed phase of the same comforting truth. If you have received Christ, to you He gives the power to become one of the sons of God, “even to them that believe on his name.” There is a whole hive full of real honey for a

soul that comes to Christ. You may even dip your hand in it, if you will, and eat as much sweetness as you please, for you will never exhaust it.

Thus I have explained how, sometimes, in seeking comforters, our work is easy.

II. But dear friends, AT OTHER TIMES IT BECOMES SO HARD AS TO BE IMPOSSIBLE. Nahum says, concerning Nineveh, “Whence shall I seek comforters for thee?”

Assyria, of which Nineveh was the capital, *was an empire which existed entirely for itself*. No Assyrian monarch ever thought of what would be for the good of the nations that he conquered. I should think that if anybody ever mentioned such a thing, he would have laughed at him, or he would have put out his eyes or cut off his head. There was no idea that anybody else had any rights at all except the king of Assyria, for even his subjects were simply his puppets, destroyed by his will and pleasure.

And Assyria was thus the incarnation of pure, or rather of impure, selfishness. Well, when a selfish man goes down as Nineveh did, who comforts him? He never did anybody any good and he may say, if he likes, “I care for nobody, and nobody cares for me.” It is very hard, indeed, to say anything by way of comfort to a man who is broken down and who never cared for other people. Do not get into that state of mind, I pray you, dear friends. I believe that selfishness is the front-door key of despair, for it never did any good to anybody. So, when it gets into trouble, nobody brings it comfort and everybody says, Who will bemoan you? “Whence shall I seek comforters for thee?”

The Assyrians also *dealt very cruelly with others*. On the great stones that Mr. Layard brought home, there are awful pictures of what was being done with the captives, heaps of heads cut off from men who had been taken in war, eyes gouged out, and all sorts of dreadful things with which I will not horrify you. And consequently, when that cruel power was put down, who would wish to seek comfort for it?

Oh, that we may be prevented from ever being cruel to others! If we are cruel to others, when our turn comes, there will be no comfort for us. These people plundered every nation wherever they went. They took away everything that they could and left them penniless, devoured the fruits of the ground, and cared nothing what desolation they left behind. But when the time came for them to be robbed and their capital to be despoiled, nobody thought of comforting them. They were left to reap what they had sown.

Besides that, *they were famous for their pride*, and that pride rose up into *blasphemy*. Remember how the Assyrian messenger, Rabshakeh, defied JEHOVAH? He said, “Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arphad? Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?” So, when their corpses were all piled up in the streets, no nation wept for them, nobody cared for them.

Oh, dear friends, conduct your business in such a way that you do not crush the poor! Manage everything in such a way that you rob nobody. Be straight. Be just. Be kind. “Live and let live,” or else, if your turn to fall should come, one of these days, nobody will bemoan you, or be sorry for you. If you lift up your hand in proud blasphemy against God and He brings you down to the dust, you will be quoted as an instance of how the justice of God overtakes the proud. The Lord keep us from all this!

I cannot help mentioning it because it is in the chapter and has to do with the text. It is much better that you and I should go humbly on in laborious poverty and find our way to heaven with good repute, than that we should become even kings of the earth and lords of all her wealth, and after all should be found to have lived only for self and to have cared for none besides, for then our downfall will be terrible in the day of the Lord’s vengeance.

But besides this, there are other people whom we cannot comfort. There is a man in a good deal of trouble about his soul, so he says. He comes to me and on talking with him, and probing him a bit, I find that he is *living in the commission of a known sin*. He says that he cannot believe. He cannot pray. He cannot get comfort. Of course he cannot while he indulges any known sin. Where shall we find comforters for you? God will not forgive you while you continue in that sin. Christ will not cleanse you from the guilt of it while you continue in the practice of it. You must part with sin, or we cannot comfort you. We will not try to do so.

And next, there are some who do not get any comfort, though they have left off sin, because *they have never made restitution*. If you have robbed or wronged anybody, when you come to Christ, do what Zaccheus did, who said that if he had taken anything from any man by false accusation, he would restore him four-fold.

There was a minister in this city, a dear friend of mine, who preached a sermon upon the necessity of restitution when wrong had been done, and some of his friends told him that if he preached in that way he would drive the people away. But during the week, he met in the street a man of about his own age, who said to him, “Were you not in Messrs. So-and-so’s warehouse once?” “Yes, I was.” Did you not lose a watch while you were there?” “Yes, I did.” Well, I was there at the same time. Do you recollect me?” “What is your name? Oh, yes, I recollect your name!” “I stole your watch. I came to hear you last Sunday night and I cannot rest till I have given you ten pounds to make restitution for that watch.” “No,” said my friend, “I do not want money.” “But I must make restitution,” said the other.

At last my friend explained that the watch was not worth ten pounds, though it might have been worth four. So the man gave him the four pounds, and he came back to his critics, and said, “I have made four pounds profit by that sermon, whatever you may have thought of it. I had forgotten all about my lost watch, but my sermon has brought me back the money for it.”

The man who thus made restitution is now, I believe, an honorable Christian man. I do not see how he could have been so with that watch on his conscience, and I do not believe that, do what we may, we can give comfort to people who have wronged others till, to their very utmost, they have made restitution. How shall I comfort you, if you repent not of your robbery, but keep the proceeds of it?

Again, there is another sort of people whom we cannot comfort, people who seem very concerned to get pardon, but when you come to understand them, you discover that *they are living in enmity against somebody*—a brother, a mother-in-law, a cousin, or a friend whom they will not forgive. They keep on harboring hatred in their minds. I am grieved to say that it is not altogether an unusual thing to find fathers who will not forgive a daughter, or a son.

They did not happen to marry the person you would have liked to choose for them and of course, you have a perfect right, have you not, to make the selection for them? You thought you had a right to pick for yourself, but you will not give that right to your children—so you have an enmity against them on that account—and then you go whining to God to forgive you and yet you will not forgive your daughter.

Here you are on your knees, crying, “Lord have mercy upon me,” yet you will not have mercy upon that friend who did once wrong you and whom you ought to have forgiven long ago. Now, remember, that it is of no use for you to pray, or do anything else if you will not from your heart forgive those who have offended you—for neither will God, even for Christ’s sake, forgive you.

There must be a clean sweep of everything like enmity out of your heart, or else you cannot be at peace with God. Enmity cannot lie down with love. Darkness cannot weld with light. You cannot enter into the peace of God till you are willing to forgive others. There are many people who get hung up on that nail—I wish they could get released from it, by God’s grace.

We meet with some also who profess to be very anxious to be saved. Perhaps I have some such here tonight, and yet *they do not pray*. You rise in the morning and you go to bed at night without a prayer. And all day long God is not at all in your thoughts. Do you expect, then, to be saved by accident? Do you really reckon that, one of these days, as you walk down the street, salvation will drop on you, whether you will or not?

Beloved, if you desire this great boon of God, ask for it. “He that asketh, receiveth.” If you want to find this treasure, look for it. “He that seeketh, findeth.” If you would get heaven’s door opened, I pray you use the knocker. “To him that knocketh, it shall be opened.” No prayer, no Bible-reading, no going to hear the Word with the earnest intent to find out what the way of salvation is, why, dear me, how can you escape if you neglect so great salvation? You are evidently living in constant neglect.

Nobody ever prospers in business who does not pay attention to it and no man can expect to enter into peace with God when he goes on in a sort of slipshod way, going sometimes to a place of worship, occasionally feeling a little earnest, but never seeking the Lord with his whole heart. Men, you will have to be aroused out of this fatal lethargy. May the Spirit of God awaken you this very night! Resolve that you will not let the angel go unless He bless you. May the great Master bring you to that state of mind at once!

There are others, and these are the people we have so often to deal with, who feel their sin and who really wish to be saved, and they do a great deal in the hope of being saved, but there is one thing they will not do, *they will not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*. They try to be saved by their prayers, as if there was any promise that God would save us for our praying. They try Bible-reading, for in the Scriptures they think they have eternal life, but they forget that eternal life is not in the Bible except as the Bible testifies of Christ and points to Christ.

They have been christened, they have been confirmed, they are members of churches, and so on, and there they rest. No, they do not “rest.” They feel that there is still something wanted which they have not yet obtained. That which is wanted, my friend, is that you should come and—

*“Cast thy deadly doing down,
Down at Jesu’s feet,”*

and trust in what He has done and then are you saved. That is the whole philosophy of salvation.

There are two ways of salvation. The one is self-salvation, and it is a dream, an empty thing, an awful disappointment. The other is Christ’s salvation—come, and put yourself wholly into His hand and say, “Save me, Lord. By profession, You are a Savior. Execute Your holy craft upon me and save me. Save me from my sin, the guilt of it. Save me from sinning, the practice of it. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, purify me from the love of evil, and make me clean. You can do it, and You alone can do it.”

Now, if you trust the Savior, you are saved. I will repeat again that declaration of Christ, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” But if you will not believe, I know of nothing whereby I can comfort you. If you will not have Christ, there remains nothing but condemnation for you. There can be no other sacrifice for sin. You have insulted God by rejecting His Son and you must go before your God unsaved and unforgiven. Beware of such a doom as that.

Sometimes we have to feel what an awful thing it would be if we had to deal with a soul that was eternally lost. Then, indeed, we might say, in the language of our text, each word dripping with tears of blood, “Whence shall I seek comforters for thee?” Will any of my hearers be lost? Will any here die without Christ? Will any here refuse the great salvation to the last?

If so, what comfort could I administer to such? I shall have, on the contrary, to put it thus, “You knew the way of salvation, but you chose the other road, ay, chose it deliberately. And if you have come into the place of wrath and death, who shall bemoan you? Who shall comfort you?” You made your choice and you must have your choice forever. All that you will suffer in the next world will be the fruit of your own sin. Hell is sin fully ripe. Drunkenness, lechery, dishonesty, lying, enmity—when these come to seed, they make hell. They pain men enough in this world. And if the softening influences of Christianity were taken away and men were just left in the world to act according to their own passions and their own lusts, that would be all the hell they would need.

You will have to feel, in every pang that you endure forever, “This is nothing but my old sin.” Whenever you are overwhelmed with woe in the next world, and look your own woe in the face, you will say to yourself, “Why, that is what I used to call, ‘pleasure,’ and it has come to me here in this shape, and I was told that I should say that. I was warned and yet I perished, despite the warning.”

If you are lost, my hearers, you will have refused the great sacrifice of which you know, for to the best of my power, in the simplest words that I could find, I have set forth Christ among you evidently

crucified—and I have said, “There is your only hope of salvation. Look to Jesus and live.” If you will not have God’s gift, if you put far from you the Christ who alone has life eternal, you need not wonder when He leaves you to yourselves.

Besides, in that day some of you will especially have to remember how you *stifled conscience*. You have gone into some worldly pleasure on purpose to silence the voice of conscience. Sometimes, sitting in this house, you have been almost brought to decision. You have said, “Please God I get home, I will seek my chamber, and fall upon my knees before Him in prayer.” How often have you been brought very near the kingdom, and how terrible is it to be so near and then deliberately to turn back! Your blood will be upon your own heads and truly, if it be so, where shall I seek comforters for you?

Some of you *would not be persuaded*. You have had a mother’s tearful admonition. Teachers have pleaded with and for you in the most earnest way. You have had judgments, too, from God—sicknesses that have shaken every bone of your body. You have been brought to feel that there is a God and that He would deal with you. Remember that solemn prophecy, “He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

I sometimes start in my sleep at the thought of one of my hearers being in hell. Ah, sirs, if you do not care about your own souls, we at least will care about them for you. How can I be clear of the blood of you all, so many of you, and so often addressed? Do you wonder that I am often distressed beyond measure at my own position? It were better for me to have broken stones on the road than to have preached to you, if I have been unfaithful to your souls. For then, in the next world, you will curse me and it shall be my hell to bear the reproaches that you shall justly fling at me. But I beseech you, by the living God, and as you believe yourselves to be immortal beings, accept tonight His way of salvation, so simple and so easy.

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “He that believeth and is baptized”—which is the Christian method, the Biblical method of confessing your faith, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

I leave you all in God’s hands. Pray, dear Christian people, that everyone who has heard me tonight, may be saved, and that this rainy night may be indeed, memorable as the night in which many a sinner cried,

*“I do believe, I will believe,
That Jesus died for me.
That on the cross He shed His blood,
From sin to set me free.”*

Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

NAHUM 2:11-13 AND 3

This is a prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh. Remember that Assyria had been one of the great powers that swayed the world—a cruel, tyrannical empire—and God at last determined to destroy Nineveh, which was its seat of government. In a high poetical strain, the prophet cries out,

Nahum 2:11. *Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feedingplace of the young lions, where the lion, even the old lion, walked, and the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid?*

You will remember how Mr. Layard took out of the ruins at Nineveh those immense lions that now stand in the British Museum. They were the very type of this great empire that boasted itself in its lion-like strength and ferocity. So the prophet cries, “Where is the lair of the lion?”

12. *The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin.*

They were always destroying and plundering, and carrying home the spoil, so that everybody was fattened with the rapine of the nations.

13. *Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts,—*

And whenever that is the case, a man does not need any other adversary. If God be against you, O my dear hearer, what will become of you? Though you should have all the power of the world, and possess robust health, abundant riches, and keen wit, what can you do against God? “I am against thee, saith JEHOVAH of hosts.” He throws down the gauntlet to Nineveh.

13. *And I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.*

It is time that they were stopped. You remember in what foul-mouthed language Rab-shakeh addressed King Hezekiah, and God now declares that there shall be no more such letters as his. God may allow evil to lord it over His people for a while, but He puts a hook in the mouth of the leviathan, by-and-by. He that restrains the sea and the waves thereof, JEHOVAH is His name, and He restrains the wickedness of men.

Nahum 3:1. *Woe to the bloody city. It is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not;*

Assyria became a great empire through violence, falsehood, and robbery. The soldiers had no respect for justice. They trod out the last spark of liberty and crushed all nations under their feet.

2-3. *The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots. The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear: and there is a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; and there is none end of their corpses; they stumble upon their corpses:*

When the Medo-Babylonian army came against the great city, it inflicted a terrible slaughter, killing the inhabitants without mercy, making a very holocaust of human bodies. But inasmuch as it was a den of criminals, this horrible execution was well deserved. Yet is the story dreadful.

4-5. *Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts;*

These people had been steeped in sin of the worst kind. They had led other nations into it and had practiced the witchcrafts which God abhors. Therefore again JEHOVAH says, “I am against thee.” When God is in arms against a triumphant nation, He soon makes an end of it.

5-6. *And I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock.*

See what God can do. They were the proudest of the proud, and now He makes them the scorn of the scorner, and sets them as a gazing stock. May God never deal in that way with any proud man here! He can easily do it—when we set ourselves up to be little gods, He can soon make us utterly mean and contemptible, and bring us down to nothing at all. It is His way to deal thus with the proud.

7. *And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?*

If you could go today, and see the vast heaps of Kouyunjik, and of the great monuments of that mighty city all destroyed and crumbling into powder, you would know something of what God can do. It does not look likely to you that London can ever become a heap of ruins and yet it may be, for its sins reek up to heaven as the sins of Nineveh did. The Lord can smite this city as He smote that.

8. *Art thou better than populous No, that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was from the sea?*

The prophet quotes the destruction of the city called No-Amon, probably Thebes, as an instance of what God can do.

9. *Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite;*

There seemed to be no measure to her strength. If she needed assistance from other nations, she had only to call them in and the mercenary tribes were ready to defend her.

9-10. *Put and Lubim were thy helpers. Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.*

So one city is a warning to another. No in Egypt is a warning to Nineveh in Assyria, and both of these a warning to our city, and a warning to every man who is proud, and haughty, and domineering, and oppressive to the poor—great in his own wisdom, and careless for the comfort of others.

11. *Thou also shalt be drunken: thou shalt be hid, thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemy.*

Nineveh never dreamed of doing that. She said, “I am a queen, I shall see no sorrow. I am the greatest of all cities.”

12. *All thy strong holds shall be like fig trees with the firstripe figs: if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater.*

As figs do when they are ripe. These castles, towers, fortresses, built to stand the siege, would be no sooner attacked than they would fall into the hand of the enemy.

13. *Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women:*

You see, on those great Assyrian stones, the strong men that are sculptured there, with their enormous muscles, telling of gigantic force. When God came to deal with them, they became weak and cowardly.

13-14. *the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars. Draw thee waters for the siege,—*

The prophet challenges them to defend themselves.

14. *Fortify thy strong holds: go into clay, and tread the mortar, make strong the brickkiln.*

That was, to mend the walls whenever they were broken. They did this with great industry. “Do it,” says God, “yet you shall not be able to stand.”

15-17. *There shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like the cankerworm: make thyself many as the cankerworm, make thyself many as the locusts. Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven: the cankerworm spoileth, and flieth away. Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are.*

What marvelous poetry is this! How terrible! Their soldiers, their rulers, their captains, were as many as the locusts and the grasshoppers, but when they were wanted, all these hosts would flee away. What cannot God do when He comes out to fight with men? “The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name.” He brings confusion to His enemies. Oh, fight not against Him! Beloved, let us be at peace with Him, the strong and mighty God. Let us confess our faults to Him, acquaint ourselves with Him, and be at peace.

18. *Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria:*

They who should have taken care of the people, the chief governors, neglected them. They who should have defended the people were out of the way when they were wanted, “Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria.”

18. *Thy nobles shall dwell in the dust: thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them.*

Let not the same be said of London. Are there any who can say, “No man careth for my soul”? Let them not be without a helper.

“Oh, come, let us go and find them!”

*In the paths of death they roam.
At the close of the day 'twill be sweet to say,
'I have brought some lost one home.'"*

Brothers and sisters, rouse yourselves—be shepherds to the people of this modern Nineveh and seek to gather the scattered flock of Christ.

19. *There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous:*

Thank God, we have not come to that point yet, there is still healing for the bruised sinner! Though the wounds of our people are grievous, there is a balm for them. We know where it is and what it is—let us not be slow to tell them about it.

19. *All that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee:*

I think that is the old Norman-French word, “bruit,” signifying noise or tumult, that has been left in our Bible.

19. *For upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?*

Nineveh had been so wicked, and had done so much evil, that when men heard that it was destroyed, they would even clap their hands for very joy that such an evil-doer was out of the way.

I know not to what purpose I was moved to read this passage, but it is specially meant for someone, to whom may God apply it by his Spirit!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—497, 515, 591

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.